



NEWS RELEASE

**NELSON P. COHEN
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
DISTRICT OF ALASKA**

Federal Building & U.S. Courthouse • 222 W. 7th Avenue • Room 253 • Anchorage, AK 99513-7567 • (907) 271-5071

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**SIX PLEAD GUILTY TO INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONSPIRACY
AND RELATED CHARGES**

*Anchorage Man Admits He Murdered Thomas Cody
With the Assistance of Thomas Ranese; Another Admits he Arranged
Assault on Different Co-conspirator*

Anchorage, Alaska – United States Attorney Nelson P. Cohen announced today, November 19, 2007, that several indicted defendants in the Thomas Ranese drug organization pled guilty to conspiracy to import and distribute marijuana. Joshua Murphy, 25, Justin Killian, 31, Yin Tak Miu, 36, William Yancy, 43, and Curtis McDonald, 51, pled guilty in late September, 2007, many forfeiting cash and other assets derived from marijuana trafficking. In his plea, Murphy admitted to hiring another individual to arrange for a co-conspirator's legs to be broken with a baseball bat. Instead, the men he hired shot the man five times on January 10, 2003. Killian, Miu, and Yancy face maximum sentences of 40 years, with a mandatory minimum five years imprisonment; Murphy faces a potential life sentence, with a mandatory minimum of ten years imprisonment.

On November 19, 2007, Nopenone Dennis Shine, 44, pled guilty to conspiring to import over 1000 kilograms of marijuana as well as murdering Thomas Cody with a 9 mm Beretta on June 1, 2005. In plea documents filed in court, Shine agreed that in or about May 2005, Thomas Ranese told Shine that Thomas Cody was threatening violence against Ranese and Shine. Between May 27, 2005, and June 1, 2005, Shine, together with Thomas Ranese, planned to murder Cody to remove him from the conspiracy as well as take control of approximately \$1 million dollars in drug proceeds being driven to Canada by Curtis McDonald. Between those dates, Shine manufactured a homemade silencer at the Ranese and Shine shop in Anchorage and fitted it to a 9mm Beretta pistol. On June 1, 2005, Ranese dropped Shine off at a location near Cody's house located at 6621 Our Own Lane in Anchorage. Shine went inside Cody's house and waited for him. At approximately 2:30 pm, Cody arrived home and Shine shot and killed him with the 9 mm Beretta. Shine then called Ranese after the shooting, and Ranese called him back using a prepaid cellular telephone. Ranese and Shine spoke numerous times during which they attempted to coordinate the disposal of Cody's body. Ultimately, Shine transported Cody's body in the back of a 2004 Ford Explorer to the Jim Creek area in the Mat-Su Valley. Ranese later met Shine in that area to burn the 2004 Ford Explorer and conceal evidence of Cody's murder. Shine then drove to Fairbanks while Ranese returned to Anchorage.

Shine faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, with a mandatory minimum of ten years in prison, as well as deportation. Ranes is scheduled to proceed to trial on April 14, 2008.

The men forfeited various assets derived from the marijuana trafficking activity. Miu forfeited over \$480,000, as well as a 1997 Dodge Diesel Pickup; Killian forfeited \$25,000 cash and his interest in a 2004 Ford F250 pickup truck; Murphy forfeited his interest in a 2004 Ford F350 Pickup Truck and a 2004 Triton Elite Aluminum Trailer; and McDonald forfeited a 2005 Ford F250 Pickup Truck used for transporting marijuana. All the men are scheduled for sentencing in May 2008.

The charges in the indictment are merely allegations, and defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. The case is being investigated by the Alaska State Troopers Major Offenders' Unit, the Anchorage District Office of the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigative Division.

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